



# Canyon Ferry

## Cabin Sales Update



Volume 1

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This is the first of what we expect to be a series of newsletters on the Canyon Ferry cabin site sale process. It is our intent to use this as a vehicle for keeping everyone informed as the process proceeds.

## SO WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE CANYON FERRY CABIN SALE PROCESS?

According to Mark Snoozy, Public Affairs Representative for the Montana Area Office, the Canyon Ferry Cabin Sale process continues to move forward, although at a slower pace than what Congress had originally intended. The legislation contained in the Canyon Ferry Montana Act (Act) called for initiating the sale of the cabin lots by November 29, 2000. While this deadline was set by legislation, it will slip because of the appraisal work that still needs to be accomplished. Snoozy says the Certificate of Survey, a critical element of the sale process, has to be finalized before we can even start updating the appraisal as required by the Act.

Many issues which affect the Certificate of Survey are being addressed. On September 21, 2000, representatives of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Canyon Ferry Recreation Association (CFRA), Lewis & Clark County, DJ&A Surveying, and the Canyon Ferry Volunteer Fire Service Area, conducted a detailed site analysis of cabin lots to determine locations of existing and proposed septic systems, vehicle access routes, lands needed for fire protection, identify

and resolve on-the-ground issues, and generally to gather as much information as possible for the Certificate of Survey. As a result of that meeting several important decisions affecting cabin permittees were collectively made. First, any permittee not having completed the work for their required septic systems by October 15, 2000, will forego any lot expansions for a septic site. Letters advising affected parties of this decision were mailed the last week of September. Adjustments in the Certificate of Survey, to include the post-deadline septic systems, can be made at a later date, but at the expense of the lot owner. Second, as of September 29, 2000, Reclamation will not consider any additional changes in the Certificate of Survey.

As far as the appraisal process is concerned, the update required by the Act will actually result in a new appraisal. Although some of the information contained in the previous appraisal can be used, the complexity of the issues require more analysis than what can be provided in an update. Reclamation and representatives of the CFRA are jointly responding to concerns raised by Knipe & Knipe, the contract appraisers, about how to handle certain issues in their new appraisal. Issues that must be considered include the status of wells and septic systems, whether or not they have been installed, and whether or not they have been approved by the county. There are also issues relating to roads and access that will be reserved for public and private uses, and for fire protection purposes. Additionally, Reclamation is requiring a flowage easement near the top of the reservoir operating pool to protect the United States against damages to private lands resulting from flooding, wave action, and erosion. The exact elevation

of the flowage easement has yet to be determined, but is expected to be five to ten feet higher than the operating pool, and may encumber many of the cabin site lots. This type of information will need to be shown on the Certificate of Survey and given to Knipe & Knipe before any real progress can be made in appraising the lands to be conveyed out of Federal ownership. Reclamation and CFRA plan to meet jointly with Knipe & Knipe within the next month to go over additions or changes to the Statement of Work for the appraisal process.



To help expedite and coordinate the sale process, Jerry Jacobs, Reclamation's Regional Realty Officer, will be assisting the MTAO Resources Management Group. Jacobs will serve as a focal point to bring concerned parties together so that issues can be resolved in a timely manner. Jacobs also brings needed realty expertise to help replace that of Mark Beatty, who recently accepted another position.

According to Jacobs, the sale process is not difficult, but there are a number of "moving parts" that must be coordinated to ensure success. Jacobs said, "Although I want to push all parties to move forward as quickly as possible, at the same time, I don't want to inadvertently lose the opportunity to remedy problem areas. We don't want to look back and ask ourselves why we didn't take care of a problem or issue when we had the chance to do so." Jacobs has already expressed concern

about moving forward on the sale when valuable staff time is lost by having to respond to individuals who choose to make unauthorized improvements, or take other actions not specifically approved by Reclamation. He added, "I understand the permittee's want to obtain title to the cabin lots as soon as possible, but such actions place an unwanted and unnecessary burden on getting the real work for the sale done."

Jacobs says that there is much work going on behind the scenes to expedite the sale process. The contaminate survey field work is complete. The Environmental Assessment has been drafted to the point that it can be completed once the Certificate of Survey is done. Sample quit claim deeds are being prepared to give to the appraisers, and we are preparing statements of work to initiate the services of a local title company to help us with closings.

We are having regular discussions with the county and congressional staffs, and we are trying to answer all questions from those who have concerns. Jacobs says that Reclamation's original deadline for initiating the sale was November 29, 2000, but that date will have to be extended to follow completion of the appraisal process which could be early or mid-summer. Once the appraisal is completed, then an orderly transfer of title from the United States to the new owners can begin.

The Canyon Ferry Cabin Sales Update newsletter will be posted on Reclamation's web site. The main internet address is listed at the bottom of the front page beneath our office address. To get to the newsletter select "Current Activities," then "Public Involvement," then "Canyon Ferry Cabin Sales Information."

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